garden cuttings

a monthly newsletter for the discerning gardener

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Our Native Flora

We have been rebuked, mildly, for publishing very little about native plants. Maybe we didn't try very hard, for once we started to look around we had offers of articles from far and wide. Some of these appear in this issue, others will follow over the next few months.

Gardeners who are not altogether familiar with native plants tend to hold one of two conflicting views - one evidently arising from the other. One is that native plants supply all the answers to 'trouble-free' gardening - they just look after themselves. The other, which comes after a short period of failure and frustration, is that 'they won't grow here, they all die'.

In many instances the reason is that unsuitable plants are used at the first attempt, and let it be said that some retail nurseries and garden centres are at fault here when they promote the sale of plants that are not suited to their own area. Fortunately there are, in every State, a number of nurseries which specialise in native plants and which know the ones that can be grown successfully. Those who wish to learn more about our amazingly diverse flora are well advised to join their local branch of the Society for Growing Australian Plants.

There is a great deal more to be learned, for we know surprisingly little about our native flora. There is much to be learned about how seeds germinate and develop under different conditions; how plants from tropical and sub-tropical regions can be acclimatised to more temperate parts; and not least we need to learn more about the value and significance of species that are now threatened with extinction by modern developments.

New techniques are coming to our aid in solving some of the problems. For example, the cultivation of species previously considered difficult has now become a practical proposition through various grafting techniques, while tissue culture opens up new possibilities of propagating plants that do not respond easily to normal methods.

The Australian Flora Foundation, under the chairmanship of Dr Brian Morley, Director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, was founded last year with the object of co-ordinating and directing much of the new research into native plants. We hope to hear more of its work in due course.

TIM NORTH

Success With Native Plants

People becoming interested in Australian plants for the first time often become wrapt in the splendours of the plants they see in books, and the promises which these books make about growing them. The splendour of the Waratah, the delicate pinks of Boronia and the brilliant colours of the Western Australia flora, especially the Banksias, catch their attention and arouse their enthusiasm.

Often the enthusiasm is short-lived. The plants fail and die. Despite warnings unsuspecting gardeners start with the difficult plants, like Brown Boronia, only to watch them die, often after vigorous initial growth, in the rain of New South Wales summers, and the humidity of the February and March period.

What goes wrong? Can S.G.A.P. provide an answer? In the short term the answer is probably No. These questions have perplexed experienced growers for many years. Conditions which may enhance good growing can be stated, but success is often something quite different.

How then do gardeners start with native plants? My advice is to begin with plants which have proved to be not only attractive but also hardy over the years, and to substitute these for others which they have already planted in their gardens for a specific purpose - i.e. as ornamentals, ground covers, or screen plants.

Once these native plants are established, and some experience has been gained, one can begin to experiment with more difficult species.

At present there are quite a number of reliable plants that can be used purely as ornamentals. They will provide colour, and attract birds and insect life. *Grevillea* 'Robyn Gordon', growing to one metre or so, is a prime example. The large red grevillea-type inflorescence contrasts strongly with the dark green divided foliage. It will survive in most areas of Sydney, and makes quite a dense plant in sunny positions. Pruning heavily after flowering will enhance its appearance. Other cultivars, such as 'Poorinda Constance' and 'Clearview David' can also be used. Both these have smaller flowers and finer foliage.

In the taller shrubs two new hybrids, *Grevillea* 'Misty Pink' and G. 'Pink Surprise', along with *Grevillea banksii* in its various colours are well worth growing in gardens. These shrubs are open, with silver-grey foliage, and the head is often over 10cm long.

The Bottlebrush family too can provide many ornamental plants. Callistemons such as 'Captain Cook', 'Endeavour' and 'King's Park Special' become covered with masses of red flowers,

The Society for growing Australian Plants

The Society for Growing Australian Plants was formed in Melbourne early in 1957 by Mr Arthur Swaby, who wrote a regular column 'Know Your Natives' in 'Your Garden'. In response to a suggestion that people interested in native plants form a group Mr Swaby was swamped with enthusiastic letters. The inaugural meeting was held in the Horticultural Hall, Melbourne, on the 12th March 1957 and resulted in a foundation membership of over 400. Mr Swaby died in 1979 at the age of 92.

In the following years the Society grew rapidly and new groups were formed in every State as well as in the A.C.T. It now has over 10,000 members.

The Society is organized under a Federal body into autonomous Regions or State bodies. Within each Region District groups are formed wherever sufficient numbers of interested people are gathered.

District groups meet every one to two months, and guest speakers often attend these meetings. Subjects for discussion include propagation, landscaping and conservation.

We are indebted to Mrs Glen Harvey, the Secretary, for the following additional details about the N.S.W. Region of the Society. In addition to District meetings the N.S.W. Region holds a meeting on the third Friday of every second month, at Ryde School of Horticulture, to which guest speakers from all over Australia are invited. Membership privileges cover four issues per year of 'Australian Plants', an authoritative booklet on native plants and a valuable reference series, and six copies per year of the Regional Newsletter, 'Native Plants for New South Wales'. It also covers access to a seed bank, and free entry to any Regional or District meeting organized by the Society.

The annual subscription for the N.S.W. Region is $12.50, and this should be sent to Mrs Glen Harvey, Secretary, at 5 Ellesmere Road, Gymea Bay, N.S.W., 2227.

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Success with native plants (continued)

dotted with golden stamens. A form of *Callistemon citrinus*, 'Anzac', has attractive white flowers which can add variation. A clump of bottlebrushes planted together, including C. 'Mauve Mist', could be an attractive feature in the garden.

All these can be pruned heavily after flowering, to the base of the flowers. Remember, however, that most Callistemons will have a second flowering each year if the dead flowers from the first flush are left on.

Other attractive plants are the Melaleucas. *M. incana,* with its weeping habit and yellow brushes, and *M. laterita,* the Robin Red Breast, with bright orange flowers borne on the old wood, are a must in any new garden.

A variety of alternative screen plants are available to replace the commonly used white Melaleuca and Hakea. For an attractive flower display in mauve *Melaleuca decussata* and *M. nesophylla* are very useful. The wine-red flowers of *M. macronycha* stand out on a very hardy bush. Dense plants, with in most cases shining silvery foliage on the undersides of the leaves, are *Banksia ericifolia, B. marginata,* and *Grevilleas hookerana,* 'Ivanhoe', *longifolia* and *asplenifolia.* All these can provide a variety of shape and foliage variation not provided by other plants.

Of course Wattles are always magnificent. The range in size, leaf shape, colour and flower can provide brilliant contrast to any garden. Some unusual ones to try are *Acacia adunca, A. cultriformis, A. fimbriata, A. floribunda, A. howittii, A. oxycedrus, A. pravissima* and *A. vestita.*

I am sure that everyone has experienced at some time or other the disappointment of discovering that *Grevillea biternata* suffers greatly from dieback, and when it flowers the spike can be over a metre tall. There are, however, many substitutes; *Grevillea obtusifolia* is much more reliable and does an excellent job. For leaf variegation *G. x gaudichaudii* and 'Royal Mantle' can be tried.

Pink Myoporum for moist areas and *Hardenbergia violaceae* for dry parts are very reliable plants. For rockeries plants like *Rulingia hermanifolia, Thryptomene payneii* and *Astartea,* with masses of pink and white flowers, can be massed for effect.

By all means try some of these plants - they are well worth the effort. Once established they bind the soil and establish good growing conditions. This short article may help to introduce to you the many thousands of plants which comprise the Australian flora. Good luck with your growing and your experimentation.

by Ray Page,
President N.S.W. Region, the Society for Growing
Australian Plants (S.G.A.P.)

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English Gardens, No 2.

BARNSLEY HOUSE, near CIRENCESTER, GLOS.

David Verey, an architectural historian, and his wife moved into the old family home in 1951. It's a gabled house of Cotswold stone; you might take it to be an Elizabethan manor, but it was in fact built in 1697, and has eighteenth and nineteenth century additions.

It's approached by a drive, bordered on one side by planes, chestnuts and lindens, while on the other side mown grass sweeps up and round the house to join the flower garden at the back. The garden is enclosed by old walls, and contains many mature trees.

Mrs Verey's interests embrace the whole history of garden design, old garden plants, gardening literature and botanical illustration. She became a 'gardening bibliophile', collecting books from far and wide; she has, for example, a facsimile copy of Parkinson's 'Paradisus', his great work of 1629, and a second edition of Gerard's Herball, published in 1633. She also has a copy of 'The Gardener's Labyrinth' (1577) from which come the three little men on our masthead, as well as more modern works like 'The Floricultural Cabinet' of 1833, leading to William Robinson, Gertrude Jekyll and E.A. Bowles.

Her interest in garden history is reflected in the structure of the garden. The garden taken over from David Verey's mother was charming but impractical. Gradually it took on a new shape, reflecting earlier traditions. There are now three main vistas, bordered with trees. The first leads from the back of the house, through the flower garden - a paved walk flanked with Irish Yews.

At right angles to this are two other allees, one an avenue of pleached limes that continues into a tunnel of trained laburnum and wistaria, the other, parallel, is of turf bordered by a wide flower bed planted in three bays, the first red, the second blue, the third grey and yellow.

Arthur Hellyer has described this garden as a synthesis of seventeenth century pattern making, eighteenth century picture making and nineteenth century plant collecting.

The front of the house looks down on two terraces, below them lawns roll down hill to meet the boundary where the garden meets the Cotswold village.

Flower beds are concentrated near the house. The Yew walk bisects a grass parterre which is bordered with beds of scented plants; the kitchen door leads to a geometrically planted herb garden.

The wilderness is planned on historical lines in the sense of a wild garden with planned paths, ornaments and trained trees. It contains choice and some rare trees and shrubs, including Paulownias, Metasequoia, a Wellingtonia, a Catalpa and several different varieties of Sorbus.

The garden is continually changing. For example a knot garden was made near the house in 1975, then a vegetable parterre was made. There are thus elements of many sources and many centuries that somehow blend easily together.

Barnsley House is one of the gardens to be visited on our Garden Lovers' Tour next year. The full itinerary for this tour will be published in *'Garden Cuttings'* next month.

Native flora - a winter gem

by Neville Bonney - South Australia

Many of us often look to shrubs to give us flowers through the winter months. One of the best groups of Australian plants for this are the group known as Correas.

These low shrubs, from ground cover up to two metres, simply cannot be surpassed in our native garden during winter months. The flowers are tubular, and range in many colour forms from white to cream to green to orange to pink to deep reds. Many of them are red and yellow. All Correas are excellent again for all nectar eating birds. They are ideal for small gardens, will tolerate, in some cases, a lot of shade and will flower in shade.

They are easily grown from cuttings and light pruning after the flowering season enables the bush to become more compact in habit.

They have a long life and again will tolerate a wide range of soil conditions. Have you ever experienced the Correas in flower on our rugged coastlines during the winter months? Spare a thought for their hardiness because the coastal Correas have to put up with some of the most extreme conditions such as gale force winds, salt spray and in many cases not much soil to grow in. The following is a list of Correas obtainable from native plant nurseries that are very useful in your native garden.

Correa alba - white starry flowers in summer, ideal for coastal gardens growing to approximately 2 metres in height by 2 metres in width.

Correa bauerlennii - 'Chef's Cap Correa' with greenish-yellow flowers resembling a chef's cap growing 2 metres high by 2 metres wide.

Correa decumbens - with upturned red bells, summer flowering. This is a prostrate Correa.

Correa relexa - various forms - red bells tipped with yellow, flowering in winter growing to 1 metre and spreading to 2 metres in width. There are quite a number of different forms available including a green bell flowered form.

Correa pulchella - with orange bells growing only to 0.5 metres by a width of 0.5 metres.

An Exhibition of Native Plants

The N.S.W. Region of the Society for Growing Australian Plants will hold its Annual Exhibition at Peakhurst High School on September 11th and 12th.

This is not just a flower show, although there will be plenty of flowers gathered from all over Australia; it is an Exhibition ranging from education in schools using native plants, to bush regeneration and other conservation issues, landscaping with native plants and their propagation.

One feature of the Exhibition is the plant sales which aim to provide as great a variety as possible in the one spot. In previous years people have arrived up to an hour early in order to be first into the plant sales section and thus be able to get first selection of the plants on offer, some of which are rare and hard to obtain from other sorces.

Grafting Grevilleas

(abridged from the Grevilleas Study Group Newsletter No 5)

Cotyledon Grafts (Paul Brady)

I have used *G. robusta* as a stock. It grows in most soils, is tough, disease resistant, easily obtainable, and grow quickly. I use very small seedlings as the stock plant. It is interesting that poor cutting material from a dying plant can be used quite successfully.

One of the reasons for grafting is the provision of susceptible plants with a disease resistant, vigorous rootstock. Grafting virtually eliminates root rot if you use the correct rootstock. Other reasons might include:

(a) the saving of rare material; it could be better to use this material as a graft than as a cutting.

(b) speed of growth. Often the vigorous stock may enhance the characteristics of the cutting, and on *G. robusta* the growth rate is certainly well above normal. Grafting often makes flowering more rapid, and more robust.

(c) growing standards. This may not be everybody's idea of the way to grow plants, but interesting and attractive results can be obtain; for example prostrate ground covers like *G. obtusifolia* and G. 'Poorinda Royal Mantle' can be grafted on rootstocks as much as one metre high to give the effect of a weeping Grevillea.

(d) novelties. Various possibilities come to mind like a *G. banksii* with red, pink and golden yellow flowers.

(e) dwarfing. Using a *G. juniperina* rootstock I am trying an adult *G. robusta* as a graft in the hope of obtaining a small growing plant instead of a giant.

I carry out these cotyledon grafts on very young plants as I find these quick to take and I don't have to worry about cambium layers not quite matching, nor do I have to wait too long for the stock plant to grow.

I use a wedge-cleft graft to ensure success. The general rules are:

(a) avoid the hottest and the coldest parts of the year.
(b) keep materials clean.
(c) with young material tying is not necessary; a good dob of Colgraft does the sticking job.
(d) watch the cambium layers carefully on uneven sized or old material.
(e) always leave two nurse leaves on the stock.
(f) remove any stock buds as they appear.
(g) place the completed graft under a glass jar. You can mist the material first. Leave it in a warm well lit place and don't fiddle with it.
(h) once the scion starts growing remove the glass jar gradually to harden it off. Re-do the waxing when the jar is removed.

Cutting Grafts (Don Burke)

There will always be some species of Grevillea that you find impossible to grow. In my case *G. dryandrii*, with the largest inflorescence in the entire genus, was the one I wanted to grow. This 'impossible' plant proved easy to grow when grafted.

The basic principle is the joining together of two bits of plant material so that their internal structures are aligned. The key area is the cambium, which lies between the bark and the wood. In general the technique involves aligning exactly the zones where the bark ends and the wood starts.

Place two plants side by side, slicing off a sliver of bark from each one and then binding them together with budding tape. Since both plants are still attached to their roots (probably one or both in pots) there is no risk of death. After about eight weeks the plants are severed so that the desired plant forms the top and the other the bottom.

Any species is suitable as a rootstock, but it should have the following characteristics - long life span, hardy in your area, mechanically strong root system, easy and cheap to propagate or purchase. In general seedlings are better than cuttings since they develop a stronger tap-root system. I mostly use *G. robusta,* but the lobed form of *G. barklyana* (Labertouche form) is suitable, as well as *G. banksii,* 'Poorinda Peter', and *G. x hookerana.*

It is a mistake to remove all the foliage from the understock too soon. Leave most of it on until the plants are severed and the new 'top' is growing vigorously. However, don't let the understock smother the new graft with shoots - nip them back so that the graft remains dominant. The reason for leaving the leaves on is that they produce food for the plant.

Commerically the method that has the most promise is called the cutting graft; this involves joining two pieces of plant material and striking them as a joint cutting. There are two methods, the side graft and the top cleft, but the first is, in my opinion, by far the best. You take a cutting of, say, *G. robusta* and make a ½cm cut downwards into the stem. A piece of the other plant of the same diameter as the *robusta* is trimmed to a wedge shape and inserted into the cut; the union is then secured with tape. Since the stems of both pieces are of the same diameter aligning the cambium is not necessary.

The Y-shape result is then placed in a peat/sand cutting mix with the folk of the Y submerged. This should be done under mist in a glasshouse. When the plant is rooted it is potted on and the undesired top is then cut off and the graft union exposed to the air. If roots have emerged from the top plant these can be rubbed off. From this point the composite plant is treated like any ordinary cutting.

Grafting - a word of warning (Pip Gibian)

We have struck one unforeseen problem: as *G. robusta* grows so quickly the stock plants need to be young and in large containers, or they will become pot-bound before planting out.

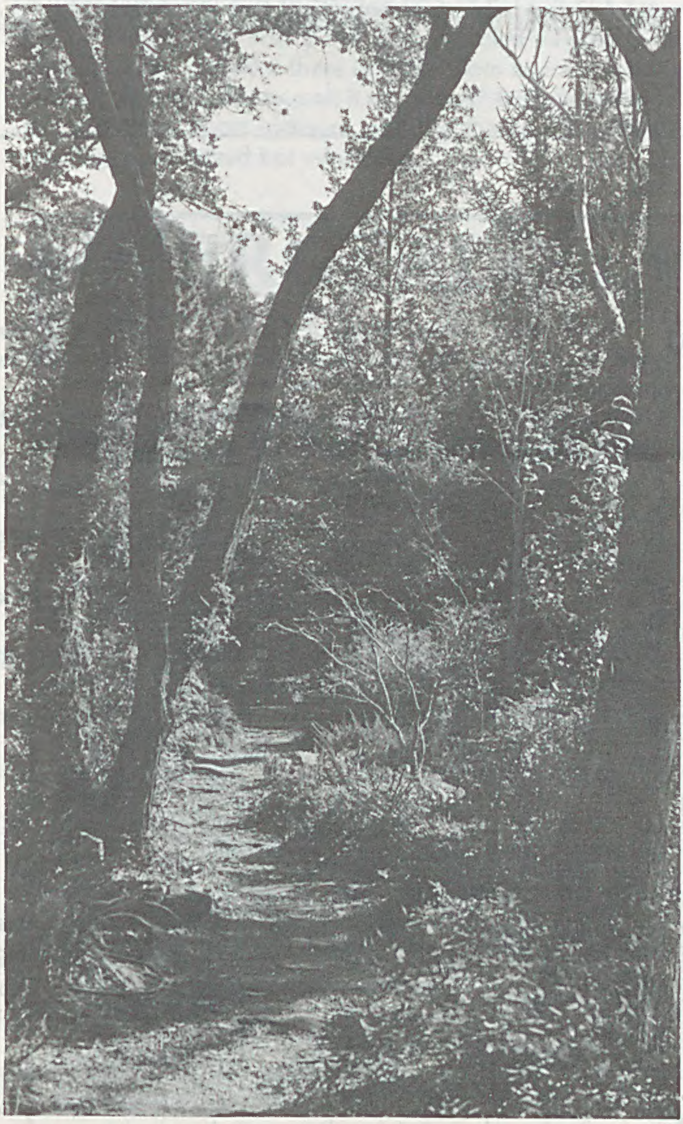
(Editor's note: owing to limitations of space, this report has had to be somewhat condensed and in particular we were not able to reproduce the descriptive diagrams that accompanied it. Any reader who would like further information or guidance on this fascinating subject should contact the Leader of the Grevillea Study Group, Mr Peter Olde, whose address is 138 Fowler Road, Illawong, N.S.W., 2234).

The Leura Garden Festival

After a lapse of a year, due to the devastating effects of drought and harsh water restrictions, the Leura Garden Festival will be held again this year. It will cover two weekends, Saturday, Sunday and Monday the 9th, 10th and 11th of October, and Friday, Saturday and Sunday the 15th, 16th and 17th of October. Eight gardens will be open from 9.30 a.m. until 4.30 p.m. each day, and as usual the proceeds will go to the Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital.

John Spellacy has been chairman of the Leura Garden Festival Committee for seventeen years, and has energetically co-ordinated and promoted it to the status it enjoys to-day. All the gardens that are open are of a high standard, some of them are superb, making this Festival a 'must' for all enthusiastic gardeners.

Below we publish an account of one of these fine gardens. Another will be featured next month.



IN THE GARDEN AT 'ELOUERA'

'Elouera' - A Captivating Garden

contributed by Jill Lovett

Let's take a preview now of one of the gardens, 'Elouera' in Sublime Point Road. The owner, Dr North, a sprightly, horticulturally knowledgeable 86 year old still cares for his two acres of garden without assistance! His interest in gardening has been a lifelong passion, starting, he recalls, at the age of four.

The name 'Elouera' is aboriginal and means 'Pleasant Place'. I approach this truly pleasant place along a wide curving gravel driveway where exotic and native plants blend together in a beautifully balanced harmony. When Dr North first bought the land, back in 1947, it was virgin bush and took his wife and himself over 12 months to clear.

Dr North described to me what it was like then. "It was a fairly level piece of land composed of fine yellow sandy soil and some good native trees and shrubs which we kept wherever possible, including lots of boronia. We built up the sandy soil simply by using lots of mulch and compost."

Today, 'Elouera' is an informal, relaxed garden. All the plants so lovingly chosen and planted by Dr North and his wife over the years, appear as if they grew there naturally. There is a simplicity of design; rambling walks take the visitor from one scene to another and there is an air of spaciousness.

There is no hint of artificiality in the delightful spinney of birches *(Betula pendula)* that provide a touch of magic not far from the house. The house nestles snugly at the foot of the drive as if it too just grew there.

A rare weeping blue cedar *(Cedrus atlantica glauca pendula)* catches the eye near the house. A gently sloping lawn ends in a rustic setting of seat and table built of local stone. To one side of the lawn a weeping silver willow-leafed pear *(Pyrus salicifolia)* graces the scene like a prima ballerina.

As we wander past Golden Atlas Cedar *(Cedrus atlantica aurea)* Cedar of Lebanon *(Cedrus libani)*, Golden Deodar Cedar *(Cedrus deodara aurea)* we find it hard to absorb the enormous variety and the uniqueness of the trees and shrubs. Maples abound in one corner with numerous rare cultivars.

The garden walks are aptly named, Rhododendron Walk, Azalea Walk, Cherry Walk, Camellia Walk and these are a wonderful sight in spring. The Camellia Walk is planted with 170 camellia bushes, some 30 years old or more. They flower for 9 months of the year beginning with *C. sasanqua*, followed by *C. japonica* and finally *C. reticulata* in November. Dr North is justly proud of his camellias and explains they are a 'specialty' of his.

For those who are interested in rare plants, 'Elouera' abounds in them. A purple weeping beech tree *(Fagus sylvatica pendula)* is purple in Spring, gold in Autumn; a hemlock *(Tsuga canadensis)* rubs shoulders with a *Thuja plicata zebrina*, a weeping rosebud cherry *(Prunus subhirtella pendula)* and a weeping Koster's spruce *(Picea kosteriana pendula)*.

We round another bend and Dr North points out a tree known as The Sacred Flower of the Incas *(Cantuadependens bicolor)*. Not far from this gem is a chinese willow pattern tree *(Kohlruteria)* which some people call the Golden Rain Tree.

Native plant lovers too have much to see. Throughout the garden eucalypts of many different species, wattles, kangaroo paw, grevilleas, banksias and many more mingle happily with the more ostentatious European plants.

Enthusiasts of azaleas and rhododendrons are thrilled by the enormous variety; there are rhododendron from Tasmania, the blue rhododendron 'Blue Tit' and 'Blue Diamond' cultivars, as well as mollis azaleas from England, and Japanese azaleas.

'ELOUERA' - continued

Dr North admits he is a conifer enthusiast too. Conifers enhance the garden from every view. The conifers are a source of interest in the contrast of leaf as well as colour. Here we see the stiff foliage of the Caucasion Fir *(Abies nordmaniana)*; in another spot the soft feathery Sawara cypress *(Chamaecyparis pisifera)*.

Tucked away along one of the walks we discover a tiny pool, fringed by water loving plants and maples. A stone's throw from this little grotto, espaliered apples and pears grow happily and produce their fruit each year.

The rare and expensive Dwarf Alberta Spruce with the tongue-twisting botanical name of *Picea glauca albertiana conica,* flourishes in several bends along the way. In Autumn, the liquidambars, beeches and maples provide a red, gold and purple glow to the garden.

I asked Dr North for his gardening 'secrets'.

"Tender loving care is the most important ingredient" he laughs, "but I also use some fertiliser about twice a year and of course, lots of compost".

Dr North has also had some humorous experience with plants that did not turn out quite like the catalogues described! He has two dwarf Irish junipers *(Juniperus hibernica nana)* which should have grown to about 1½ metres and are now 9 metres!

Gardening has many surprises and Nature is not always predictable!

'Elouera' is a garden where the traditional European garden and the evolving Australian garden has mingled, producing a beautiful and unusual 'hybrid'. The final result is captivating.

'Elouera' is not contrived. It is not geometric. It flows.

It is a place where plants feel at home. Dr North seems to know each plant personally although there are thousands of them. His enthusiasm for the plants is contagious. No wonder he is one of the youngest eighty-six-year-olds you could meet!

When Dr North first bought the site of 'Elouera' in 1947 his was only the second house on Sublime Point Rd. Next door was a tiny cottage with a rocky garden. Today that rocky garden is another famous Leura Gardens Festival garden named 'Blue Mist'. Gardens certainly provide an enormous return for the investment of time and energy put into them.

Dr North sums up the spell of 'Elouera' in his own words, "It has always given me tremendous pleasure and solace. In the days when I arrived home from my work as an eye specialist, tired, worried, headachy . . . the garden soon took the tensions away. Now I enjoy sharing that beauty with others . . ."

This sharing of the beauty is what the Festival is all about. The owners receive no monetary reward, only the deep satisfaction of their own creativity being enjoyed by others. The owners of these gardens are indeed very special people.

If you want to be part of this enjoyment and also learn a lot about gardens, why don't you come to 'Elouera' in the Spring?

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Tree Planting

Tree planting in celebration of the Year of the Tree is now hopefully in full swing. A few timely warnings may therefore be appropriate:

1. Select trees suitable for local conditions, i.e. climate, aspect, depth and type of soil.
2. Suit trees to the area available, with particular attention to ultimate height and spread.
3. Get permission from your local Council before planting trees on the footpath or road verge.
4. Keep trees away from houses and other buildings, where roots may cause damage or leaves block gutters.
5. In some areas trees and shrubs near a house may pose an additional threat in the event of bushfires.
6. Keep trees well clear of sewage and drainage lines. Even trees should be at least two metres away.
7. Avoid at all costs, when planting anywhere near a house -

most figs
poplars
willows
camphor laurels

In addition to these warnings remember that an existing large tree that is suddenly faced with clearing around it for building work can become unstable. When building on a new plot it may be better to leave a young smallish tree that can develop rather than an odd large one.

Some trees, too, are unsuitable for growing near buildings. Some Eucalypts, for example, like the Sydney Blue Gum, may shed quite large branches in a heavy wind.

Book Review

What pest is that?
Garden pests and how to identify them.

edited by FRANCES HUTCHISON - Bay Books; recommended retail price $12.95

The opening sentence of this book strikes the right chord - 'A gardener should tolerate, or even enjoy, much of the insect life in the garden'. A refreshing change from the unusual 'shoot 'em on sight' approach.

Most of the first chapter is devoted to beneficial insects, and to the general cultural controls, such as crop rotation, which can do much to maintain the essential balance, and keep pest infestation to a minimum.

The second chapter is a dictionary of common pests - uncommonly well illustrated, which makes identification quite a simple matter. In most cases, too, the life cycle of the pest is described, knowledge of which is essential to proper control measures. Pesticides in general use are described in simple, but adequate terms, and finally there is an alphabetical list of garden plants together with their most frequently met 'problems' - a useful reference starting point for the inexpert gardener.

Invasive weeds, and the herbicides needed to control them, are touched on so briefly that one wonders why they were included at all. Surely if there isn't the room to cover a subject adequately it is better to omit it altogether? Organic gardeners, too, get rather short measure, and the theory of 'companion planting' is described but very briefly.

On the other hand, one cannot blame the editor or the publisher for saying little about biological control - which undoubtedly will play an increasingly important part in garden pest control in the future. Either we are lagging sadly behind other countries in this, or else our scientists don't think we should know too much, or perhaps that we are capable of understanding much. Hopefully a later edition may be able to include more information on this very important subject.

This is, in almost every way, a well-produced book and a good reference book.. Moreover, it's easily understood, and it does fill a gap in our popular gardening literature. Definitely recommended to serious gardeners and beginners alike.

An American Wistaria

The Chinese and Japanese Wistarias, *W. sinensis* and *W. floribunda*, are spectacular and well-known climbers, but too rampant for many situations.

There is an American species, *W. frutescens*, which is smaller and much less rampant. It is native to the area from Virginia down to Florida and Texas, and has lilac-purple flowers, in nine to fifteen centimetre clusters, in mid-summer, usually later than Wistarias. There is also a rare white-flowered variety, *W. frutescens nivea*.

W. frutescens is native to stream banks and moist woods, so likes a steady supply of moisture. It will thrive in sun or partial shade.

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Some Native Plant Nurseries

New South Wales:

Cranebrook Native Nursery,
R23 Cranebrook Road, Cranebrook, 2750.
(047) 77-4256. Closed on Sundays

Forest Native Nursery,
9 Namba Road, Duffy's Forest, 2084.
(02) 450-1785. Open 7 days

Floralands,
Kariong, via Gosford, 2250.
(043) 40-1142

Kentlyn Native Plant Nursery,
96c George's River Road, Kentlyn, 2560.
(046) 25-1583. Open 7 days

Telopea Valley Nursery,
George Downes Drive, Kulnura, 2250.
(043) 76-1318. Closed on Tuesdays

Wirreanda Nursery,
169 Wirreanda Road, Ingleside, 2101.
(02) 450-1400. Open 7 days

Queensland:

Lakkari Native Plant Nursery,
477 Redland Bay Road, Capalaba, 4157.
(07) 206-4119

Victoria:

Australflora,
Belfast Road, Montrose, 3765.
(03) 728-1353. Open 7 days

(We hope to add to this list from time to time; any suggestions from readers will be welcome)

Wirreanda Nursery

Howard Smith and his wife purchased Wirreanda Nursery, in the bushland area of Ingleside between Terrey Hills and Mona Vale, just three years ago, and in that time have built it up to being one of the best nurseries specialising in Australian native plants in the Sydney region.

To get there turn off the main Mona Vale Road at Tumburra Street, more than half-way down Tumbledown Dick Hill and with the Ba'hai Temple, which stands on the top of the next hill, a landmark for miles around, still in front of you. Although this is little more than half-an-hour's drive from the city it is a rural area, and the nursery itself is on the border of the Kuringai National Park; the only intruders are wallabies from the surrounding bush.

A few exotics are grown - mainly, Howard Smith says, to please the local landscape gardeners who like to buy all their plants here - but more than 90% of the plants are natives. Not only is the range extensive, but the quality is excellent. At the time of writing there were some exceptionally fine advanced Acacias, notably *A. floribunda* (a very elegant and quick-growing tree that should be more widely grown) and *A. baileyana*. There were also some very good Grevilleas, G. 'Poorinda Rondeau' being outstanding among these.

Howard Smith is about to start grafting Grevilleas, using *G. robusta* as a stock, and is also starting to graft *Clianthus formosus*, Sturt's Desert Pea (see separate article in this issue).

Wirreanda Nursery is both a wholesale and a retail nursery and having regard to the quality of the plants, prices in both scales are surprisingly low. The nursery is open seven days a week; all the staff are fully qualified and therefore able to give professional advice. A list of plants grown is available if you send a stamped address envelope to: Wirreanda Nursery, 169 Wirreanda Road, Ingleside, N.S.W. 2101. The telephone number is (02) 450-1400.

News Briefs

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station is conducting research into 'induced resistance' against diseases and insects by 'inoculating' plants with virus suspension. This systemic induced resistance lasted at least three weeks with tobacco plants that had been inoculated with tobacco mosaic virus, and lasted all through the growing season when booster inoculations were given two months later.

The Leucaena or tropical jumble bean tree *(Leucaena leucocephala)* grows to 20 metres in five years; it's wood can be used for building, furniture, firewood, or paper pulp; the leaves can be eaten by humans or livestock; the gum is a food thickener and cosmetic; the seedpod can be eaten raw, popped like popcorn, cooked in soup, or dried for flour or coffee substitutes, or used as dyes. No wonder it's called the miracle tree of the tropics.

A Swedish inventor, Carl Lindstrom, son of the man who invented the Clivis Multrum composting toilet, that is now being marketed in the U.S., has produced the Washwater Roughing Filter, which removes all impurities from household waste water, so that it will flow freely through a drip irrigation system. It is also being used to produce leaf mould by laying a leach pipe on a long row of leaves, so that the warm water filters down, producing large quantities of leaf mould.

What is Hydroponics?

Hydroponics is growing plants without soil. Instead the plants are grown in a film of nutrient solution. The plant is usually supported by having the roots in some inert media, in which case the nutrient film surrounds the inert particles of the media. The major reason for the use of an inert media is to provide the plant with an anchor to support it. The media has other important properties, such as moisture holding capacity, nutrient holding capacity, freedom from disease and pests, and provides good aeration. It is also easy to clean.

Is hydroponics natural?

All plants need water, air and nutrients to form roots, leaves, stem, fruit and seeds. Air and water provide over 95% of the plant's requirements; the remainder comes from plant nutrients consisting of inorganic mineral salts. Plants cannot use organic substances unless these substances are decomposed into basic mineral salts. Soil is simply a factory for breaking down the organic matter into these salts for the plant to feed on. Soil bacteria are essential to this process. Hydroponics is based on supplying the plant's needs for water, air and nutrients in a form that the plant can ingest rapidly. It is ecologically sound because it conserves our scarce mineral resources. The nutrients supplied to the plant are balanced for complete growth. Fertilizers when applied to the soil are wasteful because most of the fertilizer is washed away and lost.

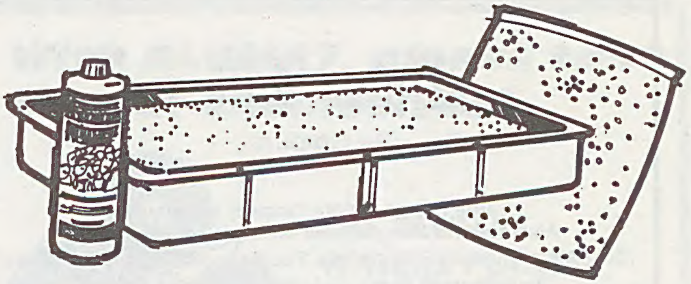
How to start?

R & D Aquaponics has a hydroponic garden kit that comes complete with the concentrated nutrient solution, the media, the growing tray, and general instructions. This kit is ideal for vegetables, flowers, herbs, bulbs, or as a kit striking cuttings, or for seedlings. It can be used to grow 6 to 8 tomato plants or the same number of sweet corn plants, 6 cabbages, or 8 lettuces. The media should be allowed to dry out between feedings, which should be about every four to five days, or more regularly if the plants are near maturity. For indoor plants, R & D Aquaponics has small kits containing the concentrated nutrient solution, the media, a pot, and instructions. However any pot will do provided that it has a deep saucer; a saucer is recommended because it will reduce the frequency of topping up. If the pot does not have a saucer a water level indicator is needed to show when the plant needs more nutrient solution.

Seeds can be planted directly into the garden kit or into the hydroculture kit. But frequently it is easier to use seedlings or plants that have been started in soil. To transfer a plant from soil to hydroponics is simple.

How to transfer a plant from soil.

Hold the plant by the stem and wash the soil from the roots of the plant using tepid water (remove any dead or excessively long roots by pruning). Now wash the roots in a fungicide solution. If you are using a pot place some explanded clay media into the bottom of the pot. Hold the plant by the stem in the pot and add more expanded clay around the roots. Make up some diluted indoor plant nutrient at the rate of one to two mls per litre with water and pour this over the media until the saucer is full. All you have to do in future is to top up the saucer with diluted nutrient solution when the saucer is dry, and once a month to spray the surface of the media with fresh water. If you are putting the plants into the garden kit then wet the surface of the media with diluted nutrient solution at the rate of 2 mls per litre of water. Make a hole in the media with your finger and place the plant in the hole. Now push the media in around the plant. All you have to do to look after your plants is to allow the media to dry out to the touch and top up with diluted nutrient solution, using 5 mls per litre of water, from a watering can.



What can be grown?

Any plants that can be grown in soil can be grown in hydroponics. Indoor plants, vegetables, flowers, herbs, bulbs - all will grow in hydroponics.

Is it essential to grow plants in season?

One of the major advantages of hydroponics is that plants can be grown out of season, particularly vegetables. With hydroponics it is possible to grow many more plants in a given area than is possible with soil. Hence it becomes practical to consider setting up a hydroponic system in a controlled environment such as an igloo or glasshouse. In fact with the tray system it is possible to move the tray around to obtain the best light and warmth. Hence plants can be started earlier and vegetables can be harvested before they start to come onto the market. Many people wait for spring to start growing their main vegetable crops. With the tray system the plants can be started in mid to late winter and moved out into the open when spring comes.

How do you look after your plants?

The same conditions apply as for growing plants in soil. Give your plants as much light as possible, but not direct sunlight except for vegetables and flowers. Ensure adequate warmth and sufficient humidity - it helps to spray the plants occasionally with fresh water. And draughts should be avoided.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Plants wanted or for exchange

Mr. A.B. Phillips, Green Toes Nursery, P.O. Box 123, North Richmond, N.S.W. 2754, is seeking bulk quantities of cutting material of -

Grevillea 'Robyn Gordon'
Daphne odora

Anyone who is able to provide these, either on a sale or an exchange basis, is invited to get in touch with Mr Phillips.

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(Mountain Fisheries)
P.O. Box 68C, EMERALD, VICTORIA 3782

The Sturt Desert Pea

The Sturt Desert Pea, *Clianthus formosus*, the floral emblem of South Australia, is a fast-growing, spreading plant native to the dry areas of Central Australia. It has rather succulent, fern-like foliage, and flowers are produced almost continuously as the trails extend in length; individual flower clusters last for three weeks or more.

It grows naturally in desert sand, and has an exceptionally long, deep tap root as well as shallow surface roots. It is sensitive to humidity, and very susceptible to fungal diseases under damp conditions. It has, therefore, always been a challenge to gardeners. Over a hundred years ago it was grown successfully in Europe by grafting it onto a related species, *Colutea arborescens*, the Bladder Senna, but of course it needed glasshouse conditions in the Northern European climate.

More recently it has been grafted onto the New Zealand Glory Pea, *Clianthus puniceus*, a much hardier perennial plant, with a vigorous root system. The procedure adopted uses very small seedlings of both stock and scion.

Grafted plants grow quickly, but need regular watering. It is important to water only the soil around the plants, as wet stems and leaves invite attacks from fungal diseases. They are best grown in large containers, and the graft must be kept above soil level. An ideal spot is under the eaves of the house, so that it has overhead shelter. In summer it needs some shade from the sun during the hottest part of the day, while in winter it should for preference be kept on a north facing verandah. Alternatively Sturt's Desert Pea can be grown in large hanging baskets, provided that the compost is never allowed to dry out.

Although they can be grown indoors they are better outside in all but the coldest weather.

The trailing stems should be kept off the soil. When they become woody and more or less leafless they can be cut off near the stem, and regrowth will start from near the base. As long as the main stem around the graft remains healthy even old plants will make stong new growth if pruned back.

Snails are particularly fond of Sturt's Desert Pea, so plants should be protected with bait. A watch should also be kept for red spider mite, aphis and thrips.

Only moderate amounts of fertilizer are needed - either half-strength soluble fertilizer (e.g. Aquasol) or half the normal amount of a slow-release fertilizer (e.g. Osmocote).

'Modern Wildflowers'

Modern Wildflowers opened in Paddington in late 1981 to become Sydney's (possibly Australia's) first wildflower specialist.

By stocking exclusively Australian flora Modern Wildflowers offers the widest available range of fresh and dried native flowers, and for the first time brings together Australian wildflower seeds, flowers and plants under one roof.

Modern Wildflowers was started by Jennifer Slatyer, an S.G.A.P. member with horticultural training, with the intention of increasing the general public's awareness of our unique flora by presenting it in an accessible and attractive form in an inner-city location. As the first inner-city retail native plant specialist Jennifer wanted to encourage people to grow native plants in small city gardens, as well as to provide a comprehensive range of Australian plants for the already committed wildflower enthusiast, who was formerly dependant on outer-suburban native nurseries.

The emphasis at Modern Wildflowers is therefore on the rarer and more spectacular native plants, and therefore the hardest to get, like grafted Sturt's Desert Pea, potted Grasstrees, Flannel Flowers, Waratahs (including advanced specimens), Christmas Bells, grafted Western Australian Hakeas, and many more. As well there is a wide range of attractive, small, flowering shrubs, climbers, ground covers and creepers, suitable for cultivation in small city gardens.

Orders for any plants not currently in stock are welcome.

In addition to native plants Modern Wildflowers stocks a wide range of fresh and dried wildflowers from an ever-increasing number of growers from all over Australia. Fresh and dried arrangments of any scale can be made to order. Local, interstate and overseas delivery can be arranged.

Modern Wildflowers supplied many government and semi-government bodies, such as museums, galleries and historic houses, with national flowers for official functions and exhibitions, for example the large-scale display for International Heritage Week at the Sydney Opera House last October. Jennifer Slatyer will be pleased to hear from any growers of Australian plants suitable for the cut flower trade or of unusual native plants.

A new watering device

Many different inexpensive watering devices for indoor plants have appeared from time to time, some but briefly; most have been successful up to a point, but with certain limitations, while others have been little more than useless gimmicks. But, as is often the case, the simplest device can be the most effective.

BLUMAT is a newcomer on the Australian scene, although it has been available in Europe and the United States for about fifteen years, and it is claimed that over two million are now in use.

It consists of a small porous earthenware cone, covered with a plastic cap, connected to which is a length of thin plastic tubing. The cone is filled with water and then inserted into the soil in the plant pot, with the far end of the plastic tubing in a container of water, which must be at a lower level than the pot itself.

As the soil in the plant pot dries out, and the soil moisture tension consequently falls, so pressure is exerted on the cone and water is drawn from it. The water in the cone is then replenished from the container by siphonic action.

It follows, therefore, that the plant in the pot cannot be overwatered, nor will it be underwatered, since the amount of water drawn from the cone will equal the amount that is lost from the soil; also, as long as the container holds water, the cone will be continuously replenished. As the device operates through two basic and simple scientific principles it cannot break down, and there are no parts to need replacement. The only attention that may be required is the removal of any algae that may accumulate on the cone after prolonged use.

Soluble fertilizer may, of course, be added to the water in the container, so that the plant is fertilized at the same time that it is watered. Plants in large containers may need two BLUMATS.

BLUMAT is available, either as a single unit for $2.95, or in packs of three for $8.50 from selected nurseries and garden centres. The packs of three are also available by mail order, for $9.80 (which covers cost of packing and postage) from the sole distributors in Australia -

NOVATEL, P.O. Box 140, Mascot, N.S.W. 2020.
to whom all trade enquiries should be addressed.

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Arrangements are in hand to produce suitable loose-leaf binders for "Garden Cuttings". They will be strong binders, bound in green Buckskin P.V.C., with "Garden Cuttings Volume 1" printed on the spine. Each binder will hold twelve issues, that is one year, and insertion will be a simple matter of sliding each copy over a separate wire held in the spine.

Each binder will cost $4.75 plus $1.00 postage and packing. Naturally we need a certain number of firm orders before we can place an order with the manufacturers, and if we can get these by, say, the end of July, the binders should be ready for despatch by the end of August. So the sooner you can send in your order the sooner can we start the ball rolling. Cash with order please!

Also, back numbers of all issues of "Garden Cuttings" are available (very limited numbers, however, of No 1) for 75c each, including postage. You can save time by using the binder order form below.

Landscape Congress in Canberra, September 1982.

For the first time the International Federation of Landscape Architects will be holding their Congress in Australia. The Australian Institute of Lanscape Architects will host landscape architects from around the world at this Congress, to be held in Canberra from the 8th to the 11th September 1982.

The theme of the Congress is 'Landscape Australia; a Challenge'. To quote from the Congress brochure, 'The Congress theme will explore the challenge to landscape in the modern world. In Australia, the old island continent and youthful nation, the problems and potentials tend to be clearly focused. This country, after tens of thousands of years of modest exploitation by a small indigenous population, reels under the impact of Western society's technological appetite, following a time span of less than two hundred years. The broadscale disturbance of landscape, environment and habitat in this land can still involve or theaten the destruction of primeval wilderness while unspoiled nature remains relatively abundant in the face of urban and industrial expansion. In various and different ways all nations face the modern-day challenge to environments on an unprecedented scale. How do we arrive at solutions and priorities to suit current understanding of 'Progress' to gain greatest benefit for humankind?"

To present this theme an impressive list of guest speakers has been drawn up.

Registration for the Congress closes on 23rd July with the I.F.L.A. Congress Secretariat, P.O. Box 3, Belconnen, A.C.T., 2616. The registration fee is $250.

Catalogues received

Nindethana Seed Service,
Nindethana, Narrikup, W.A. 6326.

A 35 page catalogue of seeds of Australian native plants. All seeds listed are available in 50c packets, or in varying quantities from 5g up to 1kg. Seed orders within Australia are despatched by ordinary mail (cost of postage extra on all consignments).

A New Plant Catalogue

PLANTLOG is an idea new to Australia, though it works successfully in one or two overseas countries, notably the U.S.

It consists, basically, of a nation-wide yearly catalogue of cultivated plants, both native and exotic, showing at which wholesale nurseries they are currently being grown. This catalogue, which is arranged in alphabetical order of plant genera, is supplemented by a quarterly Plant Trader, an up-dated list this time arranged in alphabetical order of nurseries.

Thus, if a retailer, or landscaper, or other wholesale buyer, wants to buy, for example, an advanced *Acer hersii*, he looks this up in the Plant Catalogue to see which nurseries list it; he can then, if he wishes, check out this information with the current Plant Trader, to make sure the *Acer hersii* is still listed by that nursery.

In addition, a Telephone Plant Location Service exists where buyers are looking for plants not currently listed.

This service is, of course, primarily directed towards buyers at the wholesale level; it does not attempt to catalogue plants available at the retail level, which in any case would be virtually impossible. Nevertheless private gardeners are likely to benefit from it simply because the retail nurseries from which they buy their plants will now have a much more systematized information service available to them than hitherto.

The subscribtion to Plantlog, which includes the yearly Plant Catalogue and quarterly Plant Trader, is $75.00 per year, plus $2.50 handling and postage.

Further information can be obtain from Plantlog Pty. Ltd. at either of the following addresses -

87-101 Roden St., West Melbourne, 3003 (Tel (03) 328-2050)
P.O. Box 278, Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025 (Tel (02) 331-1805)

Quote of the Month

A garden is naturally apt to fill the Mind with Calmness and Tranquillity, and to lay all its turbulent Passions to Rest.

Joseph Addison, 'The Spectator', 1712.

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garden cuttings

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Single copies are also available from the address below, and from selected bookshops (including some National Trust bookshops) for $1.00 each.

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